

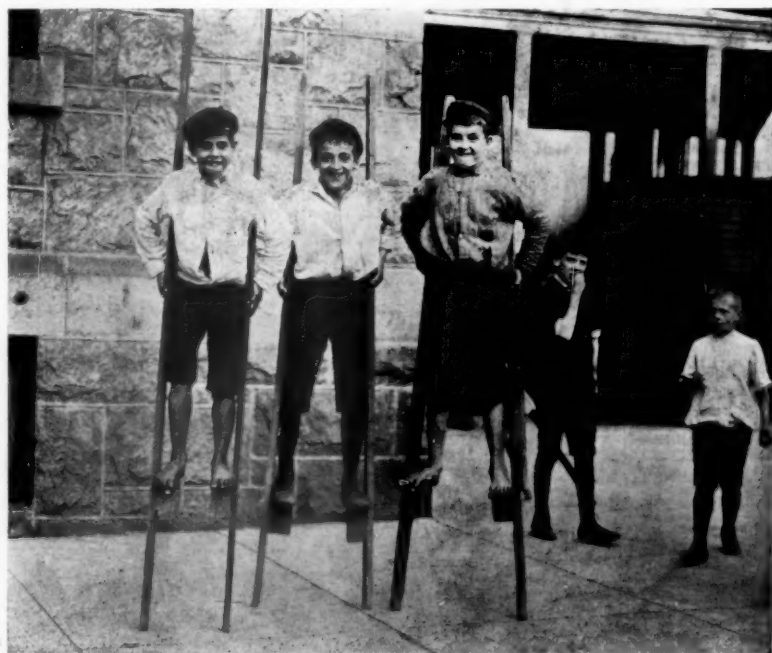
Vol. X. No. 2

MAY, 1916

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# The Playground

The World at Play



Board of Education, Philadelphia, Pa.

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# The Playground

Published Monthly by the

## PLAYGROUND AND RECREATION ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

1 Madison Avenue, New York City

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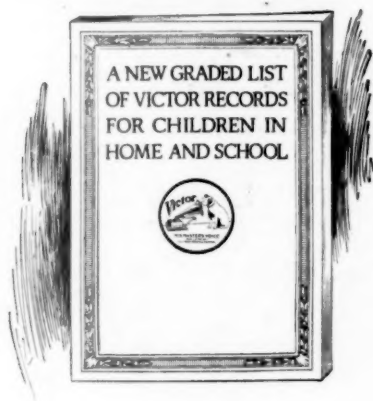
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Entered as second-class matter October 24, 1912, at the Post Office at New York,  
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## THE WORLD AT PLAY

**Grand Rapids Recreation Congress**—October 2 to 6, 1916, the Tenth Anniversary Meeting of the Playground and Recreation Association will be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan. All recreation workers are invited to send suggestions regarding the program. Already many persons are making their plans to attend the Congress. Hon. Woodbridge N. Ferris, Governor of Michigan, has given much assistance in the preliminary work.

**Forty-third Meeting of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections**—Perhaps never before has the National Conference held so much for recreation workers as the program of the coming meeting at Indianapolis, May 10 to 17, promises. Of course all social work is interdependent and every recreation worker is perforce interested in other lines of work but this year many problems of recreation itself will come up, with speakers whom we delight to hear. Dr. John H. Finley will speak on the topic, *How Can Social Agencies Promote the Effectiveness of the Public Schools?* Philander P. Claxton's topic will be *The School Center in Country and City* and *The Country School as a Community Center and Recreation* will be discussed

by speakers as yet unannounced.

A number of addresses regarding *Coordination of Civic Effort in Small Communities* will be made with Margaret F. Byington introducing the subject. George McAneny, former President of the New York Board of Aldermen, will speak on *Coordination of Community Needs*. A number of the addresses scheduled under the committee on health will touch the recreation problem closely; Honorable Arthur Woods, Police Commissioner of New York City will talk of the police as a social force; *The Municipality and Social Welfare* is a topic for a general session. Full information regarding the Conference may be obtained from The National Conference of Charities and Corrections, 315 Plymouth Court, Chicago, Illinois.

A special luncheon for recreation workers attending the National Conference will be held at the Claypool Hotel, Indianapolis, Tuesday, May 16th at 1 p. m. The price of the luncheon tickets is one dollar. Those planning to attend the luncheon should send word to the Playground and Recreation Association of America.

**A Conference for Workers with Boys**—The Tenth Annual Conference of the Boys' Club

## THE WORLD AT PLAY

Federation will be held at Scranton, Pa., May 17, 18, 19. Delegates are invited from Boys' Clubs, Recreation Centers, Boys' Departments of Settlements and Community Houses. The program is planned along very practical lines, with demonstrations and exhibits, making the gathering a three-day School of Methods. For further particulars write C. J. Atkinson, Executive Secretary Boys' Club Federation, 1 Madison Ave., New York.

**Play Institute in Savannah**—The Playground Commission of Savannah, Georgia, announces a normal institute in play and physical education from May twenty-ninth to June twenty-third. Courses in games, handcrafts, club work, storytelling, playground administration and other vital subjects are offered.

**Agricultural and Horticultural Conference**—The Conference of the Women's Agricultural and Horticultural Association is to be held in Boston May eighteenth and nineteenth. *Vacant lot gardening, trees, and hedges for town and city planting, color in the garden* are among the topics announced. Further information may be obtained from Mrs. George U. Crocker, Chairman of the conference committee 378 Marlboro Street, Boston.

**Picture from Dr. Sargent.**—

The picture on the cover of **THE PLAYGROUND** for April, 1916, An Archery Contest, was taken at Dr. Sargent's Summer Camp.

**In the death of Susan Elizabeth Blow during the month of March, America lost a notable educator—**

a pioneer in the Kindergarten movement, and to her death a leader in its promotion. Miss Blow was a pupil of Froebel and upon her return to America she established the first Kindergarten in this country, in 1873, paying all the expenses of the experiment for the first year. How it succeeded it is not necessary today to tell even those most uninterested in educational progress, for everybody knows of the kindergarten now. Miss Blow established a school for training kindergarten teachers from which many of the most prominent kindergarteners were graduated. In recent years she has lectured widely and has been actively associated with the New York Kindergarten Association.

**Los Angeles Schools in Pageant**—*The March of Empire* was represented in parade and pageant by 6,500 children of the public schools of Los Angeles. The girls sewed the costumes required, the boys built the floats and teachers and pupils searched the libraries for themes and subject matter for the great performance.

## THE WORLD AT PLAY

**Negro Pageant by Dr. Du Bois**—The story of the negro race in the form of a historical and symbolic pageant was presented in New York before 14,000 people and later three performances were given in Washington in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the thirteenth amendment to the constitution, abolishing slavery. Dr. Du Bois, author and promoter of the pageant, lectured in the Public Library the week before upon the development and significance of this pageant.

**Another Outdoor Theatre in California**—Near San Diego, within fifteen minutes' ride of the business district, a natural amphitheatre capable of seating 2,000 persons is being developed for out-of-door plays. Little houses for dressing rooms are hidden by clusters of bamboo trees. The curtain will be a thick vine arranged to slide on a wire. It is hoped to open in June with *The Blue Bird*, followed by plays of California history.

**Three Thousand in Demonstration**—At a recent demonstration of recreation work in Alameda, California, over 3,000 people took part in the short space of two hours.

**Eighteen Hundred Boys in Athletic Tests**—Forty schools of Fresno County, California, entered eighteen hundred boys

in athletic tests consisting of short races, running broad jump, standing broad jump, high jump, baseball throw and eight-pound shot put. The scores of all the boys in a school were added and the average computed, so a school of nine boys could compete with one of one hundred ninety. W. L. Bachrodt writes of the contests:

"On the day of the meet high school boys went to the surrounding schools to act as judges. The little one-teacher school competed with the twenty-teacher school. Most of the track suits of rural boys looked suspiciously like bathing suits. Spiked shoes were a minus quantity: bare feet were the best. It was a perfect day and everybody did well. After the meet was over the returns were compared and checked by a committee and the winners announced.

"The preparation for the meet meant work. Just to get forty stop-watches was a job! We borrowed from the police, the sheriff, the race-horse men, anybody—and then Mr. Balch, the assistant County Superintendent of Education, went about and timed boys in the small schools.

"This test is a splendid thing but it is impossible to carry on over a large field without some one to cover the territory. Mr. Balch did this in addition to his

## THE WORLD AT PLAY

regular school work and it is due to his efforts that it went through."

### **Recreation Legislation—**

The pamphlet on recreation legislation by Lee F. Hanmer and August H. Brunner, revised, 1915, issued by the Department of Recreation of the Russell Sage Foundation, is proving very valuable in the many places where such legislation is now being considered. Important sections of the recreation laws of every state which has such legislation are quoted, as well as typical municipal laws and ordinances. The pamphlet is indexed by states, by cities and by subjects, so ready reference is easy. It may be purchased from the Foundation for twenty cents.

**A Bill to Establish a National Park Service—**William Kent, a vice-president of the Playground and Recreation Association of America, has introduced a bill in the House of Representatives, at the request of the American Civic Association, providing for a national park service in the Department of the Interior, under the charge of a director appointed by the Secretary. In the past, management of the national parks has been left to officials subject to change with every change of administration. It

is hoped a bureau of this sort would soon become permanent and men of the right sort would find in this important work worthy careers of great public value and service, to the great and lasting benefit of the parks and monuments under their charge.

### **Palisades Interstate Park—**

The fifteenth annual report of the Commissioners of Palisades Interstate Park shows a great advance in the work of making the park serve the people. New paths, wells, camp sites, docks, added to the opportunities for recreation for those who came by the hundreds from both the New York and the New Jersey side. Train, ferry and boat service were improved. One steamboat company alone carried 69,098 persons. The Mc Allister steamboat company secured a larger boat than for the previous season for the run between the Battery and Bear Mountain, which was made in about three hours. One of the conditions of the contract made with this company was that the boat should arrive at the park before one o'clock so that the public would have at least three and one-half hours at Bear Mountain before leaving for the return trip. This steamer was well patronized and during the latter part of the season the trip became so popular that extra

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boats were necessary on Sundays and holidays.

Camp Bluefields, on what was formerly the New York Rifle Range, welcomed 1,130 different girls representing almost every occupation—saleswomen, factory workers, seamstresses, teachers, houseworkers. Following the military traditions of the place, a military form of organization was used and military drill held three times a week. Each week at the Saturday night camp-fire honors were given to the company whose tents and streets had presented the best appearance for the week. A Pratt graduate had charge of the dining-room and kitchen and the meals served for three dollars and fifty cents per week were pronounced excellent.

A camp at Car Pond in Harri-man Park, which was enlarged during the winter of 1913 from seventeen acres to nearly seventy-three acres, by clearing and grubbing the heavily timbered swamp land adjacent to the pond, and constructing three concrete dams, was conducted under the direction of the Brooklyn Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Seventy-five tents provided by the organization and individuals were erected over floors laid by the Commission. The boys were taken in relays of 350 for a two weeks' stay and were instructed in

boating, swimming, forestry work, signalling. Lectures were given each week at the nightly council fires. Each relay was taken for a tramp of two or more days through the mountains of the Park. More than 5,000 boys enjoyed this camp during the season, besides many small groups from both New York and New Jersey who occupied camps along the shores of the lake.

**Suits for Damages**—The assistant city attorney of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is authority for the statement that the only suit for damages because of an accident on a playground in the state of Wisconsin was decided in favor of the city, to the effect that the city in maintaining public playgrounds is performing a governmental function and is not liable for injuries or damage resulting from the negligence of the city's servants in the performance of such function. This case is *Bernstein vs. Milwaukee*, 815 Wis., 576, 149 N. W. 382. It is also reported in *Lawyers' Reports Annotated*.

In contrast to this decision, the State Supreme Court of Washington affirmed a decision in a Tacoma damage suit awarding damages against the city because of an accident to a child while playing on school playground apparatus.

As a result of this decision the



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board of education of Aberdeen has decided to remove the playground slide from the school grounds. The board of education of Chehalis, Wash., has also voted to remove the playground equipment from their school grounds.

**Vacant Lot Gardens in Philadelphia**—The Vacant Lots Cultivation Association of Philadelphia, which assigned gardens to 670 families in 1915, besides influencing the starting of many more gardens, prepares the idle land which is lent to it, dividing it into gardens about one-sixth of an acre in size. Plowing, fertilizer and seed, costing the Association about five dollars, is provided for each gardener, who pays one dollar a season for five years.

**Children's Gardens in New York City**—Several school superintendents in New York City have arranged to have the classes in the schools under their charge go twice a week to the children's gardens conducted by the park department of New York City. Last year 14,000 different children visited one park garden in ten days.

**Cook Ovens for Recreation**—Sending a newspaper clipping from a Sacramento paper, announcing the installation of ovens for outdoor cooking in one of the city parks, C. M. Goethe, of that city, writes:

"If you could see the string of city-tired people going out to our big wild wood park, Del Paso, and cooking at these municipal camp fire sites where the city furnishes everything even to kindling and wood, it would do your heart good."

In Hartford, Connecticut, too, are to be found great fireplaces in the parks. That at Goodwin Park is a conglomeration of old stones and fragments of statuary and marble from new structures, together with the huge field stones so much used for fences in that vicinity. The fireplace is built into the hillside on the west side of the park and about it is built a room, low, with wide eaves, measuring about fifteen by twenty feet. Iron bars across the top of the fireplace and iron pots, kettles and long hooks are provided for picnickers.

**New York Parks and Playgrounds Association**—At the annual meeting of the Parks and Playgrounds Association of the city of New York, Miss Madeline Stevens, Play Supervisor, gave an illustrated talk, showing the work of the Association. A series of "before and after" pictures illustrated how vacant lots covered with heaps of rubbish had been converted into really attractive playgrounds. One ground, where there is good leadership but, because of the character of the ground, prac-



## THE WORLD AT PLAY

tically no apparatus, held swarms of children. Another phase of the work was represented by pictures of children in institutions at play with play leaders. Many of these institutions are so hard-pressed financially for merely running expenses that there can be no provision for play and the children are really hungry for it. One attractive picture showed little convalescents in a children's hospital puttering about their tiny gardens under the direction of a play leader, provided by the Association.

Miss Stevens spoke briefly of the struggles of the Association to get streets set aside for play, showing some of the conditions it desired to improve. Always the appeal was met with the excuse that such a proceeding had no precedent in the history of the city. Finally the Association sent play leaders down into some of the streets where the children were thickest—traffic or no traffic—and the success and reasonableness of the undertaking at last proved itself and the streets were closed. Roof play centers, athletic meets and a great play day at the close of the summer were also shown in the pictures.

Honorable George Gordon Battle, President of the Parks and Playgrounds Association, spoke of the history of the Asso-

ciation and read a letter from Cabot Ward, Park Commissioner of Manhattan, commending the work of the Association and pledging the co-operation of his department. An investigation of play conditions in crowded districts revealed ninety acres of available space in the rear of tenements, if only fences could be removed. Mr. Ward recommended that efforts should be made to persuade property owners to remove these fences so useless tiny patches may be converted into usable spaces.

The Park Commissioner of the Bronx spoke extemporaneously, saying that neither he nor any of his predecessors had ever done anything for play: in his case because he didn't know the need nor how to fill it. But after Miss Stevens had persuaded him to let the Association experiment, he became so thoroughly convinced that the park commission established a number of centers.

### **Bowling on the Green—**

James B. Shea, Deputy Commissioner of Parks, Boston, Massachusetts, deprecates the lack of recognition of bowling on the green as a desirable park recreation, "not only because it is a keen, enjoyable sport which appeals like golf to the man who is past the age when he can take part in the more strenuous games but it is what we might term an

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economical sport in as much as, while the initial cost of the green is considerable, yet thirty or forty contestants may play in a space 150 feet square."

**A Domestic Animal Zoo Suggested**—A St. Louis citizen suggests a zoo of domestic animals:

"Instead of camels and buffaloes, let us have a few Holstein, Jersey and shorthorn cows and calves. Thousands of St. Louis people haven't seen a cow for years, and other thousands would not know a Hereford from a Red Polled animal. Let us have some chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese instead of cranes, storks and pelicans. Let the children learn about Rhode Island Reds, Black Minorcas, Buff Plymouth Rocks. A concrete example of the profit and pleasure of poultry raising would be worth much to any child of the city."

**Police Believe in Playgrounds**—Addressing the Greenpoint 'Taxpayers' and Citizens' Association, Deputy Police Commissioner Lawrence B. Dunham, advocated backyard playgrounds for tenement houses wherever possible:

"Myriad back yards, now too small for any use whatever and separated from the next yard by an equally useless fence, also furnish a means of letting the youngsters frolic in absolute

safety. The useless fences could be ripped down, the back yards transformed into one gigantic playground. This can easily be accomplished at little expense and brought about by the enactment of a law to cover the situation. It would mean freedom for the youngsters. It would mean they could romp and play to their heart's content without causing their parents anxiety. And it would make their play safe."

**Chaperons**—In central New York there are two institutions near each other providing recreation for young people. A few nights ago one of the young men was commenting upon the fact that the dances in one of the halls were not proving successful this year while in the other the dances had been unusually successful. The reason given for this condition was: "They don't have any good chaperons over there and they have a near tough bunch in it that decent girls won't go with."

**A Mother's Gratitude**—Probably a month's salary couldn't buy the following letter from John Hayes, playground director of a new ground in West New York, New Jersey:

West New York, Nov. 8, 1915  
Dear Mr. Hayes:

No doubt my letter will surprise you, but I must write and thank you for the wonderful

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work you taught my little girl.

Before you started to train her she was a little weak child with no strength and that always worried me. Now I can hardly believe it's the same girl—she is bright, strong and healthy and I know you must have been good and kind to all the children or else they would not have been so interested in coming to the playground. Again I thank you for my Juliette's health. It seems a gift to me.

Yours truly,

Mrs. Varula

**A Governor Who Knows the Value of Play**—Governor Ferris, of Michigan, is a strong believer in active play, which shall call forth initiative and skill. Writing in *Association Men*, he says:

"At the age of six or seven years, like all healthy boys, I asked father for toys. On one occasion I said, 'I want a top.' He said, 'Make it. Mother will give you a spool and here is my pocket-knife. Go ahead.' I whittled for a few minutes and found the cutting difficult. I returned the knife to father, and he asked, 'Where is the top?' I said, 'I do not want a top.' He replied, 'You do want a top. Make it or I shall be obliged to punish you.' I was so well acquainted with my father that I made the top. On my returning his knife he commended me by

spinning it and remarking, 'That is a fine top.' My father built better than he knew. He put lime in my spine by insisting that I make my own carts, wagons, sleds, kites, boats, windmills, and that I finish every task I voluntarily began. Modern fathers and mothers have forgotten the fine art of demanding that their boys help themselves. The toy shop, through thoughtless fathers and mothers, has dissipated the energies of our boys and placed a premium on helplessness."

**First Playgrounds**—Hammond, Indiana, a city of 30,000 population, this year establishes summer playgrounds for the first time. There will be six playgrounds with a man and a woman director in charge of each one. The grounds are all near school-houses so that the school buildings can be used in stormy weather. May these summer playgrounds be so successful that Hammond will decide to continue its play and recreation work throughout the year.

**Community Service Bureau**—North Carolina has organized a State Bureau of Community Service with W. C. Crosby as executive secretary. Community service leagues are established, the area covered by each league including at least twenty square miles. These leagues are not established unless

## ECHOES FROM THE YEAR BOOK

the representative of the State Bureau of Community Service finds that the conditions will favor the success of the organization. The first item in the statement of the purpose of the leagues is to increase the happiness of country life; the last, to promote community welfare by united effort. One of the committees suggested is a committee on organizations and social life, the objects of which are (1) To promote and assist the local farmers' organizations, farm women's club, young people's debating society, and community fair, (2) To encourage lectures, debates, musicals, entertainments, local plays, picnics, celebrations, and to make community surveys and maps, (3) To promote wholesome sports and recreation, outdoor and indoor games, and a community playground, and to co-operate

with the committee on education in making the school the social and intellectual center of the community. Five communities have thus far been organized and registered under this plan.

**The Readers' Guide Supplement**—The publication of the *Readers' Guide Supplement* was undertaken in January, 1913, to meet a very evident need arising from the discontinuance of the *Annual Library Index* after 1910 and the decision not to publish what would have been the 1907-1911 *Poole*. The *Supplement* now indexes about seventy periodicals regularly, among them THE PLAYGROUND. Subscription rates are based upon the number of periodicals listed for which one subscribes. The H. W. Wilson Company, White Plains, New York, publishes the *Supplement*.

## ECHOES FROM THE YEAR BOOK

Year book returns always include an inspiring number of accounts of activities and efforts which statistics only faintly represent. Throughout the country splendid public-spirited men and women are giving themselves to the play movement so wholeheartedly that they have no time to advertise their works, so perhaps by accident one learns of their accomplishments. Perhaps the few quotations which space permits may give an idea of some of this work.

"The Meadow Bank Playground, Lebanon, Pennsylvania, is a beautiful spot near the heart of the city, with nearly all the apparatus made by hardworking iron workers, parents of the children

## ECHOES FROM THE YEAR BOOK

who enjoy it. Only sliding boards were purchased and tennis court equipment. It was an unsightly, unsanitary marsh and dump until one man saw its possibilities. In a few weeks it was transformed. Business men and office men pitched in and had calluses on their hands for the first time in their lives."

A minister in Edgemont, South Dakota, writes: "We tried more than a year ago to get some of the people of the town interested in a playground and a play leader but no one would give any help. This spring I determined to do what I could myself for the sake of my own boys (4 of them, ages 5-8-11 and 13) and some of our Sunday school boys and girls. I put up two swings, a teeter board, and volley ball ground. These were all used and besides we played dodge ball, baseball, and a few other games. This was all carried on on the vacant grounds about the church, and there was such interest that I had difficulty to hold to the three days a week, which was all the time I could spare."

"The work developed here (Oceanic, New Jersey), under the leadership of the pastor of the Presbyterian church—who happens to be myself. This is a small place surrounded by the homes of the wealthy people of New York City and I have succeeded in securing their co-operation in the work I am doing. Though we have no organized recreation societies, we have a parish house which we recently built from an old church, remodelled it—added to it at an expense of forty-three hundred dollars, raised by public subscription. The building is open to all denominations, controlled by a board of directors made up of prominent men of the place."

From  
Rochelle,  
Illionis

"I have been going to send you a little report of our playground. I have filled out the blank and it seems very meager on paper, but we had a successful summer and I am anxious to do anything I can to encourage the smaller towns. We have only 3,500 population. In various ways we earned the money and the school board gave us the use of grounds and basement of the building, toilets, and drinking fountains, so we had no expense for ground or buildings. We hired an excellent play leader—feeling this to be of the *utmost* importance. Our equipment consisted of parallel bars, horizontal bars, jumping standards, jumping pit, traveling rings (four), flying rings (1 pair), eight swings, one sand pile, two giant strides (home-made), one twelve-foot Tothill slide, two croquet sets, two volley ball courts, two tennis courts, one tether tennis, one indoor baseball diamond (four balls, two bats), one basketball



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court (two balls). Fourteen boys earned the athletic badge sent by your Association. Every morning from nine to twelve a kindergarten was conducted. Storytelling and folk dancing interested children of all ages. One of our teachers kindly gave her services. We had a class in basketry with most satisfactory results. Every week had a special feature and the interest never lagged. We closed with a most successful track meet. The merchants gave away prizes and a silver cup was given the highest point winner. There are many things I might tell you. There was a great deal of opposition but we went steadily forward. We raised our money easily and with the small sum we were able to have a most successful season and many of our opponents became our friends. The "Playground Movement" was new to them, but the demonstration of its efficiency seemed to be satisfactory. We are hoping to get some organized play in our school curriculum and plan an evening recreation center. The board of education purchased all permanent equipment, so that helped us financially and gave us the satisfaction of knowing they were pleased with our effort."

From  
Johnson City,  
Tennessee

"Up to September, 1914, there was little work done here in Johnson City for the children other than to send them to school to study. The motto was that our schools are for pupils to work in. A new high school was erected at a value of \$75,000 but no gymnasium or playground was afforded to the boys or girls. I came here as manual training teacher and seeing the needs of some things to interest the children, made plans for the equipment of the three grade schools with playground apparatus. The principals of all these schools raised the money for the steel pipe and lumber. I gave over my time for three weeks and many Saturdays to install the equipment. On the school grounds we placed one basketball court, one volley ball court, four swings for boys and four for girls, four see-saws each for boys and girls and sand piles. In addition to these on the Martha Wilder ground were placed a set of traveling rings, four parallel bars and one set of flying rings. Such pieces have since been added to the West Side school.

"In the high school I organized athletics. We put up two outside basketball courts and one inside court. The inside court was in an old building which we rented for the winter. Here we played our basket ball in the city and state league. There were six teams in the city league and we played two games a week on a schedule, also two teams practiced each night from 6:30 to 9.



## ECHOES FROM THE YEAR BOOK

"I expect to re-organize this city league this winter. We also have football and baseball, in which about fifty boys take part. Girls also are in the basketball. There is a dramatic club in the high school of which I take charge and also of the school singing. Our funds are all raised by the pupils and by entertainments.

"I am hoping to get a playground assistant this fall and if you can send me any literature I shall be pleased to have it."

**Accomplished  
by Women's  
Clubs**

Mrs. J. S. Detwiler, of Kansas City, Kansas, in sending in information regarding the playground work in Kansas City has shown how effectively women's clubs can work to help develop the recreation movement.

"The Council of Clubs, an organization composed of representative women from all the clubs of the city has, under its civic department, a chairman of public playgrounds and schools as recreation centers. We succeeded in getting the commissioner of parks to 'try out' play under a play leader this summer with such good results that they intend to continue and to enlarge the work. Through the efforts of the superintendent of schools, who served on the citizens' committee, the board of education arranged for a week's instruction in play and recreation for our city teachers in September. It took a year of hard work to arouse public opinion sufficiently to get any tangible results but we now feel confident of greatly increased playground facilities shortly.

"I enclose copy of resolution I had the task of preparing at the last Council of Clubs meeting for presentation to the city commissioners. A copy was also sent to the Mercantile Club and the latter has expressed itself as in sympathy with our wishes and is also urging an athletic field for school sports.

"Several obnoxious mosquito-breeding, water-filled hollows have been drained by the city and turned into play spaces and the street commissioner has promised to help give increased play facilities by closing streets in front of school buildings, wherever possible, at recess time, also to help improve low school grounds where earth from grading is available for the purpose."

The resolution referred to follows:

"The Council of Clubs respectfully asks that, should the commissioners yield to the request of the Mercantile Club regarding the further purchase of outlying tracts of land for park purposes, the commissioners will not bind themselves to any policy which will prevent the buying of playgrounds throughout the crowded dis-

## ECHOES FROM THE YEAR BOOK

tricts; but asks that the commissioners purchase with the least possible delay a play place for the congested foreign districts and that they purchase other needed playgrounds as rapidly as possible.

"The Council of Clubs would respectfully call the attention of the commissioners to the fact that of all our taxes only nine and six-tenths cents on each \$100 valuation is paid for and used for recreation purposes, paying interest on park bonds and providing a sinking fund to retire park bonds."

The superintendent of schools writes of play in the schools:

"All of our forty-two grade school buildings have regular play programs. Play occupies the same position on the daily program as arithmetic, language, reading and other subjects. Teachers are required to play with their own pupils. One or two teachers are to be seen with their children on the playground at almost any time during the day. Organized play, under the direct supervision of the teacher, is carried on in this manner. At the regular recess periods, children play the games they have been taught at the regular play program period.

"All three of our high schools have extensive athletic and recreation programs. The main high school has what they call an outdoor gymnasium. Much of the work that is ordinarily done in a gymnasium is done in the open air.

"All of our four hundred seventeen teachers are very enthusiastic in regard to our playground and recreation work. A large number of our schools and classes and school organizations have had hikes to the woods and historic country places. On these trips they have had games and sports, bonfires, luncheons, 'weinie' roasts. The high schools have regularly organized hiking clubs. Our teachers have been out on several Saturday trips across the country. We have had as high as three hundred seventeen teachers on these trips and all enjoy very much these long walks through the country.

"During the week preceding the opening of schools in September our teachers were instructed in the matter of organized play, wholesome recreation and school play programs.

"We do not have so much playground space as we need. However we are determined to use to the fullest extent all the ground we have. Nothing has done more for our teachers and our students than what we have done in the way of organized play and outdoor recreation."

In Niles, Michigan, too, playground progress was due to a woman's organization—the Women's Progressive League.

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"Niles, Michigan is a city of 6,000 and the League is a federation of all the study clubs of the city with a membership of about 200. It was organized March 20th, 1912, for civic work. The park and recreation committee purchased a beautiful wooded island of about four acres in the St. Joseph river, within five blocks of the center of the city, at a cost of \$525. A substantial bridge of wood, rest rooms and a small cement pavilion were built and all who were interested in the park project were invited to assist in clearing the grounds of underbrush and fallen trees. Men responded with teams and tools, school children came with rakes and hatchets and others with hot coffee and sandwiches. The day was pleasantly and profitably spent and much was accomplished. The committee next placed tables and benches and erected swings. The money for these improvements was raised by subscription, rummage sales and entertainments.

"In addition to the island, the president, Mrs. W. W. Dresden, purchased and donated to the League two hundred and fifty feet of river front adjacent to the park, at a cost to her of \$400. Mr. W. L. Lewis donated nearly one hundred feet more of river front in continuation of Mrs. Dresden's gift—value of \$150. These bits of river front are to be set out with native shrubs.

"The park and recreation grounds have been deeded to the city and the park committee now works in conjunction with the city park commissioners. The city has provided a well, electric lighting and a caretaker for the island, also cement walks and curbing along the river front. The gates are closed at seven except when an evening's entertainment is given on the island.

"Work planned for 1916 is swimming pool, dance pavilion, and labeling all trees and shrubs so that children may learn to identify them. The grounds are used from morning till night and are in great demand for picnics and family reunions.

"The playground committee has equipped six of the city school grounds with swings, see-saws, traveling rings, horizontal bars, slide and basket ball stops. Teachers serve as play leaders when apparatus is used by the children. The playgrounds are well lighted at night and are vacated at 8 p. m. The money for equipment was raised by subscription, bake-sales and entertainments. A proprietor of a moving picture house gave two matinees and two evening entertainments for the benefit of the cause. The plays presented were *Ivanhoe* and *Little Dorrit*. The preceptress and the teacher of English explained the scenes as the plot unfolded. School chil-

## ECHOES FROM THE YEAR BOOK

dren assisted in the sale of tickets. The high school boys on their own initiative placed a fine tennis court on the central school grounds. The students also assisted the playground committee in placing basket ball stops on the various school grounds. In five of the ward schools under instruction of the teachers the children are taking up the work of flower and vegetable gardening.

"The school committee of the League has observed the day set apart for tree planting and with the aid of the school children has planted trees in the different school grounds of the city.

"The high school rooms and gymnasium are used once a week by the Young Women's Club, an independent organization of about 150 members supervised by well-known society women and home makers of the city. The directors are chosen one from each church in the city, including the Catholic and Christian Science churches. The branches offered for study by this society are domestic science, dramatic art and gymnastics. The directors also provide lectures and music as forms of entertainment. The average attendance is about seventy-five.

"Two other important clubs of the city are 'The Mothers and Others Club' and 'The Parents and Teachers Club.' The object of these societies is co-operation of parents and teachers and the betterment of child life. The schoolrooms are also used by these organizations."

"The work in Ponca, Oklahoma, has been done through the efforts of individuals—not an organization. Boys of the town needed a play leader so much during vacation time, that fifty fathers of boys between the ages of six and sixteen were asked to contribute a small sum per month the first year 'to pay the salary of a young man to come and devote his entire time to the improvement of our boys.' Boys up to twelve years came during mornings and boys over twelve during afternoons. Scout organization with forty members was formed. Swimming lessons were given. Nothing was done for girls, as funds were limited and the need of the boys seemed more urgent. The second year the work was carried out according to the same plan, but more extended."

From Fayetteville, Tennessee comes word: "In connection with our school we have organized a playground association which meets for one hour every Friday afternoon. At first it was considered a very foolish waste of valuable time and still is except by a few who have been charitable enough to come and see for themselves. I teach in a county school. There are only three teachers. We play

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games for forty minutes and tell stories the remaining twenty minutes or usually longer.

"The principal of the school is chairman of the association; I am chairman of the story committee, and the third teacher chairman of the plays and games committee. Our president is one of the patrons. We have also a finance committee, composed of the patrons. That, of course, is purely honorary.

"In conducting the work in this way of course we are doing a thing that true teachers despise for none of us knows anything of playground work. But, as crude as it is, the results are decidedly beneficial in ways too numerous to mention."

### In Small Communities

Garnett, Kansas, is making use of the rural schools as community recreation centers. At least once every two weeks both the young people and the older members of the community come together to play games and enjoy some regularly planned program.

In Severy, Kansas, the W. C. T. U. donated \$60.00 worth of playground apparatus. The work required for erecting the apparatus was contributed by members of the community interested in the movement. Though there are only about nine hundred people in the community a new high school building has been erected with a gymnasium.

Some private individuals in Friendship, New York, a small community, have been working to create an interest in the playground movement. The past year a baseball ground was rented and enjoyed by the boys. Mrs. Isabelle Dudley in writing of the work says, "One good thing that has grown out of our effort is the community spirit. A special school meeting will be held soon for the purpose of voting upon the question of acquiring several acres of land joining our school building for a playground. A proposition will come before the League meeting to rent the skating rink certain hours for basketball, the teachers to direct. We have \$220 in our treasury. We are marshalling our hosts just now for a community Christmas entertainment instead of splitting up into many different church activities. After the holidays we plan to prepare a pageant for the celebration of the Fourth of July."

An association has just been formed at Stella, Nebraska, a town of less than 500, and apparatus to the amount of about \$100 has been purchased. The teachers are acting as play leaders until regular leadership can be provided.

Escalon, California, with a population of 500 has a ground



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known as Jones Park on which tennis courts and basket-ball grounds have been laid out. There is a clubhouse on the ground in which one room has been set aside for the Camp Fire Girls, one for a lodge room, and one for a dining room.

### Recreation Activities in Connection with Schools

The board of education at Vinita, Oklahoma, a community of 4082 people, pays \$10 a month extra to teachers who serve as play leaders at recess periods, at noon and in the morning before school

opens.

The board of education at Lake Charles, Louisiana, requires all teachers in the public schools to devote at least forty minutes of the noon or recess to teaching games and playing with the children. Folk dancing is taught in the school and dancing teachers direct the dancing in an open air pavilion in the school from 8:20 to 9:00 o'clock.

The board of education at Hutchinson, Kansas, employs an athletic director for eleven months and he will next summer direct the summer playground work. During the school year he devotes his entire time to directing play, games, and athletics.

Mr. J. P. Vaughan, superintendent of schools of Chisholm, Minnesota, sends the following account of the play activities which are being conducted in connection with the schools. "We have, at the present time, a woman who is directing physical education for lower grades and the girls of the upper grades and high school, beginning with the sixth grade, and a man who is giving his time to the physical education of the boys. In addition we have a full time school physician and a full time school nurse. The following brief statement will indicate the scope of this work:

"The first five grades have a period for physical training, largely games, dances, and calisthenics in the school. Beginning with the sixth grade, the girls have one hour for gymnasium work and forty minutes for swimming each week. This is true also of the seventh grade. The eighth grade has one hour and twenty minutes of gymnasium work each week and forty minutes for swimming, and the high school girls, two hours thirty minutes each week with forty minutes for swimming. An hour period is set aside for gymnasium work for teachers and two-hour periods for swimming during the week.

"The time allotted to the boys for gymnasium work and swimming in the grades is practically the same as that given for the girls. The high school boys have four hours a week for gymnasium work,



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and during the playing seasons from three to five hours a week for football and basketball.

"We have playground supervision from 8:30 to 9:00 and from 12:40 to 1:10 by regular grade teachers. We have provided also for playground supervision from four to five each day, and for four hours on Saturday, by teachers who have had special preparation for this kind of work. The grades have also twenty-five minutes of supervised play during the regular school day, each under the direction of the teacher in charge.

"We have evening study periods and evening gymnasium periods totaling four nights each week from seven to nine for high school boys. We also have a total of seven evenings for gymnasium work, including games, for adults who are not in school. One evening each week is set aside for class or inter-school games, and one evening for social activities which usually include social dancing.

"We have one regular grade orchestra, one regular high school orchestra and three other beginning classes composed of about eighty-five pupils who are learning piano, violin, or some other instrument.

"There are two literary societies in the high school, and two debating teams selected through competition. Last year we maintained a course in visual instruction with slides and lectures with one or more films each week. The program was offered for school children at the close of the school and for adults in the evening. It is planned to continue this activity during the present year.

"Our night school, in addition to the work in physical training before mentioned, comprehends the giving of instruction in English, civics and the common branches, domestic art, domestic science, and manual training.

"We have this year added a department of agriculture, and we are hoping to make gardening an important feature. This will be carried throughout the summer when playground work and industrial work will be continued. The playground work will include excursions to nearby woods and lakes."

C. S. Risdon, superintendent of schools of Independence, Kansas, writes that all the teachers do playground work and that five school buildings are social centers for children and adults.

The manual training teacher with the help of the boys in his course did most of the work in installing the apparatus placed on the school grounds in Bismarck, North Dakota.

J. W. Ireland, superintendent of schools at Bellevue, Kentucky,

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writes that in clearing the two school playgrounds, the expense of which was met by the city and the board of education, a considerable section of each yard was cleared for the purpose of providing skating rinks. Mr. Ireland writes that it is generally conceded that the money was well invested and the expenditure is regarded as an investment and not a tax.

Ross Varden, supervising principal of Wakefield, Massachusetts, in sending in year book returns said, "Ball games of various kinds, relay races and competitive tests are held at recess periods with all grades with excellent results. In stormy weather simple indoor games and folk dances take their places. We have found that where these activities are conducted there is a decided improvement in the conduct of the pupils both in and out of school hours.

"About two hundred ten pupils of my school have gardens at their homes each year. These are visited and exhibits supervised by the Parent-Teachers' Association."

Sabetha, Kansas, last summer did some interesting work with school gardens. Under the direction of the superintendent of schools and a few private individuals three acres were cultivated by twenty-five boys and at least \$100 worth of produce raised.

The Y. M. C. A. of Clinton, Illinois, maintains two tennis courts for members only. This winter, however, the courts will be flooded and opened to all for skating.

Ottawa, Illinois, through the generosity of one of the citizens has been presented with a wading pool which cost \$495.00.

Riverside, California, is making a feature of its swimming facilities. There is a large concrete plunge in Fairmount Park equipped with dressing rooms. Bathing suits are provided by the city. Through the efforts of the chamber of commerce, a municipal swimming pool has been constructed on property belonging to the city about a mile away from Fairmount Park and a large number of boys who cannot take advantage of the park plunge enjoy this.

Sharon, Pennsylvania, has a park valued at over a million dollars, with a \$50,000 endowment. It is equipped with tennis and artificial lake and playground and other facilities. Buhl Club, which cost \$4,000.00 contains a library, gymnasium, and many other branches of social and educational work are carried on there. Both the park and the club were presented to Sharon by F. H. Buhl.

New Ulm, Minnesota, has no public playground but the New Ulm Turn Verein employs a regular teacher of gymnastics to give instruction in gymnastics to the children.

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Mr. L.D. Middough writes that through the athletic department of his store he has conducted a Sunday school athletic league, confined to Sunday school members. Among the activities are water polo and basket ball. From 250 to 350 boys share in the activities throughout the year.

Miss Vida Newsom of Columbus, Indiana, writes the following:

"We have two well equipped playgrounds here and Columbus is well represented in the playground world in Indiana. During the past year we have circulated the moving picture film of our first playground over the state and it has been exhibited under the auspices of women's clubs and the extension division of Indiana University in fifteen cities and towns."

St. Albans, Vermont, a community of about 6,500 people has for a number of years had the Stranahan Memorial Club conducting special work among boys of the community. Three workers are employed the year round and the club is open fifteen hours a day during the entire year. Recently the Verulum Club has been organized to work among the girls and there is now a worker devoting her entire time to organizing and supervising the girls' activities.

As a result of a playground opened in Windsor, Canada, by the Windsor Horticulture Society, so much interest was aroused that the alderman have thought it wise to open three additional playgrounds.

In Sheridan, Wyoming, a skating rink has been made in the park by building a dam below the park which backs up the water in a creek and provides about a mile of good skating.

Joliet, Illinois, is working out some very comprehensive plans in connection with the public schools. One school has a playground of twenty acres, a second eight acres, and a third two acres. Tennis courts, running tracks, baseball and football fields have been laid out and wading pools and playground apparatus are being constructed. On the eight-acre site there has been completed an auditorium with 600 seating capacity and large stage with full settings, moving picture booth and gymnasium with 70 ft. x 40 ft. floor space and seats for 400, and swimming pool with seats for two hundred, shower baths, lockers and dressing rooms.

Similar buildings are being planned for the other centers and will soon be built. Play under leadership will be conducted at all three centers during the entire year.

## *ECHOES FROM THE YEAR BOOK*

### A SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT FROM COLUMBUS, OHIO

Accompanying the year book returns came the following report:

In the spring of 1915 a back yard garden campaign was carried out. Seeds were obtained from the Home Gardening Association, Cleveland, Ohio, at a very low cost and sold to the children at what it cost us, which was one cent a package. Forty-seven schools took part in this "Beautify Columbus" scheme.

During the same spring we instituted a "Make Columbus a City Beautiful, Co-operate with the Department of Public Recreation Campaign." Through the Spring Hill Nurseries, Tippicanoe City, Ohio, we got shrubs at a low cost. These we sold out to pupils in order that they might beautify their homes: ten thousand seven hundred eighty-eight pieces of shrubs were distributed in the fall of 1914. The individual orders in the fall were 400. In the spring of 1915, 610 individual orders were taken. We are now conducting the same campaign, and it bids fair to out-do all previous campaigns. The campaigns have done immense good, and people are demanding that we keep it up, even though it entails much labor and time.

Our camp for girls is located along the Big Darby River about seven miles west of Columbus. The total attendance of girls at the camp during eight weeks, in spite of the cold, damp and rainy weather was 217. Two hundred thirty-two extra meals were provided for visitors. Total expense of camp, including supervision was \$645. During the 1914 season three hundred thirty-nine girl were at camp at a cost of \$841. Each girl paid the small fee of \$3 per week to help defray the expense of the camp. This fee defrayed all expenses and left a balance.

Under the supervision of the supervisor of gardens about 400 vacant lots were ploughed and turned over to citizens to cultivate. These lots were vacant and overgrown with weeds. Permission was secured from the owner to use his lot. A man ploughed the lots under contract of \$1 per lot. Seeds were sold at cost. A greenhouse was rented and tomato and cabbage plants were raised and sold to the people at three cents per dozen. Besides these the supervisor supervised a great many back yard gardens, giving the owners expert advice about gardening. Children of the schools were interested and groups of children farmed vacant lots in common, under the instruction of a paid teacher. The children were taught how to plant, weed and take care of gardens. The people used or

## *ECHOES FROM THE YEAR BOOK*

sold the products of their lots. A survey was made and it was found that the lots yielded from \$50 to \$100 worth of products. Mr. Banks, superintendent of the garbage disposal plant stated that the money value of the garbage was reduced from \$12 to \$8 per ton during the summer because the Department of Public Recreation was very active in developing gardens, and people were eating vegetables from their gardens and not buying meat. Hence the grease product of the garbage was lower and the garbage was not worth so much.

During the winter twenty boys' basket ball leagues were run and one indoor baseball league. A girls' basket ball league of fourteen teams was also run. A church indoor track meet, public school outdoor track meet, eight leagues of school baseball, champion of the city swimming races were also held, as were champion races for the public school boys and girls in separate events. A picnic for all the playground children was held at Olentangy Park, cars being furnished by the street railway company, all were under supervision and all the children were taken to and from the park without any mishap of any kind or any child's being lost.

In May, 1915 with the co-operation of the Y. M. C. A. a Learn to Swim Campaign was conducted. Men and boys who did not know how to swim were given free lessons under competent teachers.

The Y. M. C. A. gave the Department the use of their pool and furnished two teachers and the department two. The campaign covered twelve days, and in this time 1,060 men and boys were each given two free lessons in swimming. A similar campaign was held in 1914. A great many boys and men learned to swim and it did much good. The expense was very light.

The three park playgrounds were kept open after school from 3-5:30 p. m. for seven weeks until cold weather set in. The total attendance was 7,287. Basketball and football were the favorite games. Soccer football was also introduced as well as other playground activities.

This spring Council appropriated a bond issue to build a recreation center in Glenwood Park. This building has social rooms, game and reading rooms, swimming pool, a gymnasium shower and locker rooms, assembly hall. The building will be completed about December first. Work is about to start on a recreation house in Schiller Park, but will not be completed until September, 1916. This is a Y type building, with kitchen facilities, gymnasium, social and game rooms, check room, central supervisor's office, auditorium with stage, shower and locker rooms.



## ECHOES FROM THE YEAR BOOK

### **The Common in Anaconda, Montana**

The City Common consisting of an entire block in the heart of the city donated to the city by the Anaconda Copper Mining Company was this year again the great popular and attractive recreation center. Thousands of school children of all ages enjoyed the ice skating during the winter evenings. A band of music is frequently in attendance and rest rooms are fitted up on the ice for the convenience and comfort of the small children. Certain afternoons are set aside for hockey playing and many good contests are witnessed throughout the winter. During the summer months the city maintains two baseball leagues composed of four teams each. One is made up of boys under twenty-one years of age and the other is composed of young men over twenty-one years. The leagues have the exclusive use of the Commons four evenings each week. Fully 5,000 of our citizens witness the games each evening and many come from the surrounding towns and country to enjoy the evening sports. The other three evenings of the week are left open for diversified contests and practice. The Common is provided with bleacher seats on all four sides. As soon as the baseball season closes the Common is transformed into a football field and the boys from the higher grades enjoy their evenings in games and practice. The city band gives a concert in the band stand on the Common every Friday evening during the summer months.

### **A People's Building**

Mr. F. J. Jennison of Marquette, Mich., writes that the establishment of the playground movement in Marquette under the direct control of the school board and under the supervision of the playground directors has been accomplished. The next undertaking will be the submission to popular vote of the proposition to erect a large convention hall. It is planned to place the management of this hall in the hands of a commission of business men who will give their services without pay and to turn over the revenue earned by the building to the retirement of the bond issue with which funds will be raised. This People's Building is to be conducted purely for the benefit of the general public and probably will be made to serve not only for convention purposes but as an amusement hall at a low admission fee. Moving pictures, dancing, ice and roller skating, large social gatherings of all kinds, meetings for the general public welfare and many other activities will be arranged for in this building.



## ECHOES FROM THE YEAR BOOK

### Civil Service

The following cities reported on civil service examinations:

Los Angeles, Cal.; San Diego, Cal.; Loveland, Colo.; Atlanta, Ga.; Chicago, Ill.; Evanston, Ill.; Newton, Mass.; Worcester, Mass.; Detroit, Mich.; Minneapolis, Minn.; St. Paul, Minn.; Joplin, Mo.; St. Louis, Mo.; Elgin, Neb.; Wymore, Neb.; Jersey City, N. J.; South Orange, N. J.; Buffalo, N. Y.; New York City; Oswego, N. Y.; Yonkers, N. Y.; Cincinnati, O.; Cleveland, O.; Columbus, O.; Dayton, O.; Philadelphia, Pa.; Pittsburgh, Pa.; Seattle, Wash.

In addition the following cities reported that civil service examinations were held, but not for all employees:

Denver, Colo., and Brookline, Mass., hold civil service examinations for the year-round positions. Springfield, Mass., gives examinations for the position of director of public recreation, and Elizabeth, N. J., has civil service examinations for only one of the employees. Newark, N. J., reports on civil service examinations for all except the play helpers and this is the plan adopted by Syracuse, N. Y.

East Orange, N. J., holds non-competitive civil service examinations for the first two positions. In Perth Amboy, N. J., examinations are given by the supervisor and in Oakland, Cal., formal examinations are held by the board of playground commissioners. In San Francisco, Cal., Savannah, Ga., and Dallas, Texas, appointments are made to the positions, and Baltimore, Md., New Orleans, La., and Allentown, Pa., give special examinations.

The following cities reported on bond issues:

### Bond Issues

Chicago, Ill., \$300,000. for playgrounds and \$300,000. for beaches; Brockton, Mass., \$21,250.; Fall River, Mass., \$15,000. for new site; Detroit, Mich., \$15,000.; Ypsilanti, Mich., \$27,000.; Fergus Falls, Minn., \$3,000.; Jackson, Miss., \$36,000.; Camden, N. J., \$166,000.; Elizabeth, N. J., \$6,000.; Newark, N. J., \$40,000.; West New York, N. J., \$5,500.; Syracuse, N. Y., \$100,000.; Yonkers, N. Y., \$4,000.; Toledo, O., \$50,000., for two sites; Youngstown, O., \$35,000.; Carrick, Pa., \$40,000.; Dallas, Tex., \$500,000., for parks and playgrounds.

Robert A. Bernhard is now Superintendent of Playgrounds and Recreation under the newly organized Bureau of Playgrounds and Recreation of Rochester, under which the recreation work of the Board of Education has been combined with that of the Park Department.

### New Appoint- ments in Recrea- tion Positions

## ECHOES FROM THE YEAR BOOK

George M. Roberts is now Supervisor of Playgrounds under the Department of Playgrounds of Washington, D. C.

J. Leonard Mason, is now field secretary of the Playground Association of Philadelphia.

J. P. Rovira has taken the place of A. C. Pease in Tampa as Superintendent of Playgrounds.

J. A. Mott is now Superintendent of the Bureau of Recreation of the city of Scranton in place of C. R. H. Jackson.

A few weeks ago a civil service examination for the position of General Supervisor of Men's and Boys' Activities was held in Detroit, Michigan. G. Fred Ashe, formerly with the Pittsburgh Playground Association, passed the examination at the head of the list and was appointed to this position.

**Additional State-  
ments Regarding  
Year Book Facts** Mr. Wm. J. Lee, Supervisor of the Bureau of Recreation of the Department of Parks, has submitted the following lists of officials who are in charge of playground work in connection with the parks of greater New York:

Cabot Ward, President of the Park Board, Commissioner of Parks, Manhattan and Richmond

William J. Lee, Supervisor, Bureau of Recreation, Manhattan and Richmond

Raymond V. Ingersoll, Commissioner of Parks, Brooklyn

John J. Downing, Supervisor, Bureau of Recreation, Brooklyn

John E. Weier, Commissioner of Parks, Queens

Thomas W. Whittle, Commissioner of Parks, Bronx

The Bureau of Recreation of Scranton, Pa., reports that there are five community centers being conducted instead of two; four of these are open four nights in the week, one five nights.

The Park Board of Dallas, Texas, has made the following corrections in the figures which were sent for publication in the Year Book.

Year-round centers, 13; summer centers, 13

Number of men employed, 10; number of women, 4; number of caretakers, 13

Assistants during July and August, 300; at winter centers, 150

Value of land and buildings, \$50,000

Total expenditures for 1915, \$12,000

The president of the Park Board of the city of Dallas is Mr. Henry D. Lindsley; secretary, Mr. W. C. McGintie.

## THE NEED OF PLAY IN INSTITUTIONS

Luther Halsey Gulick, M. D.

President, Camp Fire Girls of America, New York City

"When visitors to my orphanage find me working at my desk," says Dr. Rudolph R. Reeder, of the New York Orphan Asylum, "they frequently offer an apology for taking my time, but such courtesy seems to them unnecessary, if they find me on the playground with the boys and girls. That is 'only play.' In my judgment it is as important as any work I can do, even to conducting devotional exercises."

This illustrates a new attitude toward play—an attitude which unfortunately does not yet pervade all our institutions. A friend of mine went to a large orphan asylum to tell a story. In a previous visit she had been impressed with the utter emptiness of the life she saw there. "The amount of perfectly good information those children could reel off was heart-rending," she declared, "I thought of the hours they must have spent cramming improving facts, and I wanted to amuse them with a perfectly frivolous animal tale." She arrived at the asylum in the middle of a beautiful Saturday afternoon, and found the little girls sitting at school desks in a closed classroom, learning a catechism. On her arrival the matron arose. "Annie," she said, "run out in the yard and tell the boys to come in at once. The lady is here to tell them a story." The protestations of the story-teller were in vain. "They are just playing ball," she was informed. Her insistence accomplished only one thing: the boys were told that those who "wanted to come in, might come." But as she saw the sullen haste with which a large crowd of boys filed into the room, she knew what "wanted" meant in that institution.

The matron was not intentionally cruel. She thought she was producing character by strict discipline and lack of freedom. She prided herself on the well-regulated order of her institution. She spoke constantly of the obedience she secured. But the school-teachers in the neighborhood, where the "orphans" went to school, complained bitterly of disobedience, thieving, trickery, and meanness. They declared that those orphans were naturally bad; they traced their faults to an evil heredity. They told hard tales of petty crimes of nastiness and meanness committed by those children, when outside the institution. The matron did not believe the tales; they were always obedient to her. Was there any con-

## THE NEED OF PLAY IN INSTITUTIONS

nection between the type of obedience she obtained and the character the children showed elsewhere?

Repetition does not produce habit and character; desire produces habit. Making a boy brush his teeth in the morning for ten years would not make him brush his teeth for one more morning. Getting him to want to do it makes the difference. I have walked down a flight of stairs and bumped my head hard against a low ceiling, and at that instant established a habit which made me duck every time I went down those stairs, a completely unconscious act; whether I thought about it or not, I ducked.

The matron apparently thought that she could control without giving freedom. She thought, and many of us seem to think, that obedience can be cultivated to such an extent that it shall balance over and become self-control. Yet we know that twenty years in prison, where the most perfectly enforced routine of living is secured, does not develop in the individual that high degree of self-control which such obedience would suggest. It is fortunate when the reverse is not the case. Does the perfect control maintained by the seamen on our men-of-war, where they rise on the minute, eat, work, play, attend divine worship, all according to well-regulated schedules, mean *self-control*? Do they show a beautiful order of conduct when they spend their off-days in the harbor? I have seen in Yokohama that they do not.

Where there is no freedom, there can be no self-control. A boy who is never allowed to exercise the power of choice cannot learn to choose the right and reject the wrong, and it is in this that moral development consists. If a boy is made to do a thing by force, he has to; he may or may not want to. It is a non-moral proceeding. It may be necessary, but it is not on a moral level; it is on some other level. It may be necessary for him to take quinine. He may object to it so vigorously that you have to hold his nose and open his mouth; it may be good for him, but it has no effect on the improvement of his morals. An institution finds it necessary to compel obedience in many things; the larger the institution, the more necessary this compulsion may become. But this obedience is not sufficient to develop the child's moral nature. He is not free, and freedom and morality belong together.

But absolute freedom, irrespective of the rights of others, is not only unmoral, but immoral. What is the answer? It is to be found in the proper kind of play. On the playground the child becomes a recognized member of a community. He is proving him-

## THE NEED OF PLAY IN INSTITUTIONS

self and his principles practically in an ethical laboratory, where his choice is governed as choice is governed in the larger outside world, first perhaps by the opinion of his fellows, and later by an actual perception of the effect of his action on the larger social unity. By actually entering into democratic relations with others, he learns social responsibility and self-control, for the sake of the group and the demands which the group makes upon him.

In a group game—especially in a team game—a child's personality is claimed and absorbed by something larger than himself; something which contains him as a part, which needs him, which demands that he shall make sacrifices, stop thinking solely for himself, and join in, heart and soul, with all the other members, working together for success. He must lay aside personal grudges, jealousies and resentments; he must care more for fairness than for victory; he must learn generosity; he must learn that one member of a group cannot do wrong without involving all; that in mutual loyalty is the greatest individual happiness. He does not know all these things when he begins to play; his earlier plays are not marked by this generosity and unselfishness. But play with a group of other boys gradually forces these facts upon him from a source which he recognizes as authoritative for his actions, because it comes from the whole of which he himself chooses to be a part.

How much more effective the judgment of his peers may be than is the opinion of any adult, is illustrated by the story of a Sunday School teacher, told by Dr. Richard Morse Hodge. The teacher had occasion to rebuke a boy for something. The boy stoutly defended himself against the teacher. But when the man appealed to the other boys of the class for what they thought, they replied: "Yes, that's just the kind of fellow he is," and the fellow wilted. Is this case typical?

But, we are asked, do the boys in an institution need to be taught to play? Will it not be enough to assure them some time for play, interrupted not too often by the sudden demands of other aspects of institutional life? Will it not be enough to turn them loose in the open air for a certain time each day, and let them do as they choose, making their own traditions and playing at their own will? Why should a superintendent like Mr. Reeder go out to play with the boys, unless for the reason supposed by the visitors—that he wants amusement himself and has no real duties?

The report from a person who has carefully investigated con-



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ditions in over one hundred orphan asylums is perhaps a sufficient answer to the question of the necessity of teaching children in institutions how to play.

"I have seen children at play in about one hundred institutions, and beyond the use of toys, I have never seen them playing any game but tag. Repeatedly I have been told by care-takers that 'they like to stand around and watch each other.' In photographing the so-called 'playground' of a large institution, I tried to take a picture of the children at play; but they did not know how to pose for me, as they had never been taught how to play even tag. They just ran around and pushed each other.

"In one institution some fifty little boys are daily sent to the cement-floored basement at playtime. There is no supervision. The president of the institution told me that they did not know what to do with themselves, and dug the putty from around every one of the panes of glass in the windows. They were reprimanded for this and told to 'play.' Not knowing how to play, they scooped out little crescents of cement from the floor in a sort of pattern and when they were reprimanded for this, they sat around the walls in mute despair. The children tell me 'they do not like to play because of the bullies.' In other words, competition is not fair in undirected play, and the children who do not like freefights keep out of the playtime activities. I have known this to be true of institution after institution. The apparent contentment of institution children, their lassitude and calm, is commonly mistaken for a satisfied play-instinct. Close study of these little inmates indicates that lack of bodily tone, of motivation and opportunity to learn to play are the chief features of this passivity."

The same testimony comes from scores of men and women actively engaged in institutional work. "One rarely sees a boy who can play any well-known games without being directly coached," says one. "Games are unknown in asylums till not only taught, but practised. Two women visited a model orphan asylum one exhilarating Sunday afternoon and found all the children indoors. The sisters had assumed that it was too cold for the children to go out, and had not proposed it. No child had had the initiative to think of an out-of-doors excursion. The prospect of a snow-ball fight would, no doubt, have been carried by acclamation and cheerfully permitted; but there was no one to take the initiative."

"Lack of initiative and lack of inner response to the demands of the social group," these are the two greatest lacks of children in

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institutions. The best method of supplying these lacks is through the efficient play leader—the man or woman who can mingle with the boys and girls, encouraging them, playing with them, showing new games, and perhaps most of all cultivating a sense of fair play. Such a leader must know children so that he will be able to appeal to motives which are ready to be awakened, and to develop the sense of group-loyalty which is the foundation of later unselfishness.

One of the boys in the garden class in the New York Orphan Asylum stole radishes from another boy's garden and was caught in the act by some of his companions. All the gardeners were at once assembled; the boy and his case were set before them. After some discussion the motion was made and unanimously carried that the boy forfeit his garden. It was one of the best in the plot and he had spent much time on it, but by his deed he had violated property. So far, the action was sustained by Dr. Reeder, the superintendent. But when a boy moved that the delinquent be "required to weed all the other gardens" the chair refused to put the motion. He states his belief that if he had put it, the motion would have been carried, on account of the boys' natural laziness and the recent increase in weeds, and especially on account of the unpopularity of the culprit. He explained quite carefully the distinction between the inevitable punishment which the boy had brought upon himself, and the revenge which would be a mean taking advantage of a "fellow who was down." A man who can see this distinction and impress it upon the boys is a much-needed factor in the growth of group life and group tradition.

Some of the play activities just now receiving special attention from the playground movement are particularly applicable to children in institutions. The same difficulties which beset institutions beset our modern city children. The same forces which will help to develop group life in the one place will help in the other. Folk dances in institutions for children are especially recommended by a woman who has become thoroughly acquainted with the life in hundreds of such institutions. The necessary floor space is present, and the necessary shelter. The fact that the same children are together throughout the twenty-four hours gives especial opportunity for developing the educational opportunities in which the folk dance is so rich.

Two children of my acquaintance, brought up in a home and under favorable surroundings, found so much pleasure in the folk

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dances that they brought them into their housework to give an added zest. While washing the dishes, one of them would suddenly whistle a well known tune and the other would execute a few steps, with the dish in her hand, returning almost immediately and with increased pleasure to her work. If this is true of children who have opportunities of many kinds, what would be the effect of a folk dance in an institution, where spontaneity and joyous initiative are obtained with such difficulty?

Play traditions are also notably lacking among the children in an institution for dependents. Broken families, poverty stricken homes, have left no chance for the growth of play tradition. More than other children they need it; but they get it much less than other children.

There was John, sent from a most sordid home to a reform school. Mrs. Charles F. Weller tells his story. On her first visit to him, his mother—dissipated and immoral, but not without maternal affection,—said: "Johnnie, what did you do that first evening? Weren't you awful homesick? Didn't you miss the other boys?" "No," said John, "I went right out on the playground and forgot all about it." John came home a much improved boy. Fresh air and exercise and the wholesome, vigorous play must have had something to do with driving out the poisonous germs that filled his mind. In his own home he had grown familiar with vices of every sort. His life had bred into him a growing cruelty and a morbid interest in the horrible things of life. He had need of much play—noisy, wild, boisterous play, to make his mind as wholesome as a boy's mind should be.

No children need play more than the children in an institution; no children get less of it. Some institutions have been sufficiently touched by the playground movement to introduce play and play leaders as a regular feature of their life; but the great mass of institutions have not awakened to their privileges. Two things all children need, institutional children most of all, since institutional life necessarily makes rigid demands for mechanical obedience in many things. The two things are: individual initiative developed through free choice, and a response to the demands of the group which shall not be mechanical but truly social and hence truly moral. Without these things no true character can be obtained, no real happiness secured, no really large efficiency in any line developed. Play and the effective sympathetic play leader can best be trusted to secure these qualities.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### CHARACTER THROUGH RECREATION

By Reverend Howard P. Young. Published by the American Sunday School Union. Price, seventy-five cents net; by mail, eighty-five cents

### LAUGHTER AND LIFE

By Reverend Robert Whitaker. Published by the American Sunday School Union, 1816 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Price, sixty-five cents; by mail, seventy-three cents

These two books won the first and second prizes offered for the best manuscripts on the subject *Amusements: How Can They be Made to Promote the Highest Well-Being of Society?* Together they form a rather remarkable treatment of the question of play from the standpoint of the modern church.

Mr. Young's book, designing to show "a kinship between recreation and righteousness," considers the universality of the play instinct and cites numerous instances of actual character-building through play and, on the other hand, of "sports that kill." Most of the book is devoted to the ideals of recreation, abundantly illustrated, and to the part the church and the home as pillars of ethics should perform.

Mr. Whitaker's thesis, that the type of laughter of an individual or a nation indicates the standards of morality, whether it be the light laugh of scorn or the vital laugh of perfect fellowship with purity and truth, is developed by a consideration of the natural function of play, a mighty "social cement," and of the obligation for one and all "to live life to the utmost, and to do only those things which make for the enlargement and enrichment of life." The labor problem, social legislation, evangelism and other vital topics are discussed in relation to the true spirit of play.

### THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE'S PLAY

By Henry A. Atkinson, Social Service Secretary for the Congregational Churches of the United States. With an Introduction by Washington Gladden. Published by the Pilgrim Press, Boston, 1915. Price, \$1.25

The author analyzes the past and present attitude of the church toward play in general and especially toward dancing, cards and the theater and recommends breadth of vision in dealing with play and amusement. Numerous examples of the dangers and disasters of the play instinct misdirected are given, emphasizing the responsibility of the church in the play life of its people. Results attainable from a definite play program for the church are illustrated by a number of striking experiences in various parts of the country.

Regarding such a program the author says, "There is a difference of opinion among the church people as to the value of this kind of work. Some of the churches have unwisely looked upon every play facility offered to the people as a means of increasing the attendance at the Sunday school and church services, and have measured the success of every undertaking in terms of the increased enrollment in the church and Sunday school." The most successful undertakings, however, have been where it has been seen that "the one thing requisite if the church is to become a social center is, that its eyes shall be turned outward toward the community rather than inward toward itself. . . . Some day the church as a whole will see its opportunity and throughout the country wherever there is a church there will be a center for inspiring the community and helping it to face its problems bravely and solve them with wisdom."

### STREET-LAND: ITS LITTLE PEOPLE AND BIG PROBLEMS

By Philip Davis, assisted by Grace Kroll. Published by Small, Maynard and Company, Boston, Mass. Price, \$1.35 net

The author during several years' experience as supervisor of licensed minors

## BOOK REVIEWS

for the Boston public schools picked up a tremendous deal of information regarding children upon the streets not only street workers, but worse still, street players and street idlers. He also saw causes underlying the conditions and figured out ways of improving them. All of these things he has set down in a very readable book.

### THE LITTLE PLAYBOOK

By Katharine Lord, 15 Gramercy Park, New York City. Price thirty cents each

Two of a series of plays written expressly for amateur production by young people have appeared—*The Minister's Dream* and *The Greatest Gift*. The first is a Thanksgiving play, the second a Christmas play. Both are well adapted for playground or neighborhood center use as they are simple and easy to produce and give opportunity for a large number to participate in songs and dances without a great deal of rehearsing of the entire cast.

Two new plays are announced, No. III, *The Day Will Shakespeare Went to Kenilworth* and No. IV, *The Maiden of No Heart*, an Indian play for girls' camps.

### LEADERS OF GIRLS

By Clara Ewing Espey. Published by The Abingdon Press, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York. Price, seventy-five cents

Out of a wide experience in girls' work, this leader gives her message to other leaders struggling along a difficult path, as yet all too seldom marked with guideposts. She emphasizes first the importance of the leader's recognizing the ultimate aim of the work with groups of girls. "She would scorn the idea of cutting into a piece of silk without first deciding whether to make a party dress or a petticoat, and she would never begin to combine ingredients without thinking whether they would result in fruit salad or baking powder biscuit; yet she does not hesitate to make an almost indiscriminate use of the activities which should help to mold the lives of her girls in their most impressionable years." A recognition, too, of the three different girls every girl is during her teens is necessary. Each of these girls is analyzed and ways of getting over the more common pitfalls suggested. The "silhouettes" at the end of the book, character sketches of imaginary leaders, would repay study by every club leader to see which description fits herself.

### EFFICIENCY IN HOME MAKING AND FIRST AID TO GOOD COOKING

By Georgia Robertson. Published by Robertson, Publisher. The Kenesaw, Washington, D. C.

All the questions one would think of and many besides, regarding the management and care of a house are answered in catechism form, followed by a similar treatment of general principles of cooking. It would seem that such a textbook or reference book would delight young girls and perhaps give them in addition to elementary principles an interest in the matter which might lead to a broader study.

### VITAL PROBLEMS IN RURAL LEADERSHIP

By Walter J. Campbell. Published by International Young Men's Christian Association College, Springfield, Mass.

Though this volume considers the whole field of rural needs, not particularly recreation needs, it is interesting to see how closely at the root of all such problems recreation is found to lie, and, as the introduction says, "For many an apt phrase and illuminating bit of experience Professor Campbell has made us all his debtors."



## BOOK REVIEWS

### MANUAL OF PHYSICAL EXERCISES

By A. R. T. Winjum. Published by the author, Battle Creek, Michigan

The author, director of physical training at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, presents in clear and simple form many of the exercises which have proved beneficial to patients at the sanitarium. The point of view is the upbuilding and maintenance of health, rather than recreation, though the student is urged to concentrate fully and to enjoy the exercises.

### CAMP AND OUTING ACTIVITIES

By F. H. Cheley and G. Cornelius Baker. Published by Association Press, 124 E. 28th St., New York. Price, \$1.00

This book aims not "to prepare a book on camp technique, but rather to bring together from many sources all available material dealing entirely with activities that have a positive all-round character-developing value." Directions for games for stormy days, "stunts" around the camp fire, complete words of a number of songs, the text of several plays, as well as the names of others which may be procured, religious activities and much other material make a book "cramped with suggestions so that no two days of the camping season need be alike."

### ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

The official handbook of athletic and recreative activities of the public schools of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, published by the supervisory committee on athletics, revised to January 1, 1916, gives athletic principles and rules as interpreted and adapted for the best interest of the Philadelphia public schools. Rules for games and meets and drills are given, a pretty comprehensive survey of athletic procedure. Ordinarily a limited number of copies may be obtained from the Director of Physical Education, Philadelphia Public Schools, at the rate of fifteen cents per copy or \$1.50 per dozen postage prepaid, but at present an edition of 10,000 is exhausted.

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